

26, 2003. I was not able to be present to vote on H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on passage of H.R. 1, Rollcall No. 332. In addition, had I been present, I would have voted yes on passage of the Military Construction Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004, Rollcall No. 325; yes on H. Res. 277, Expressing Support for Freedom in Hong Kong; yes on passage of the Health Savings and Affordability Act, Rollcall No. 328; and yes on the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, Rollcall No. 333.

RECOGNITION OF NANCY
GERMANN

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize Nancy Germann of Jefferson County, Illinois. Nancy was recently inducted into the Senior Saints Hall of Fame of Jefferson County.

Nancy received this honor for her lifelong service to others. For 33 years she made a positive difference in the lives of students. She loves teaching so much she returned to the classroom after her retirement as a special education aide. Nancy is extremely involved in her church and community. Some of her activities include singing in the church choir, assisting with the soup kitchen and Thanksgiving dinner for the needy, and serving as a director for Cedarhurst Chamber Music along with helping with other Cedarhurst activities.

I want to congratulate and thank Nancy for all she has done and will continue to do for the people in her community. She is a saint to all who know her and is deserving of this prestigious honor.

TRIBUTE TO E.L. HUTCHISON

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress and this nation today to pay tribute to an outstanding citizen from my district. E.L. "Hutch" Hutchison of Durango, Colorado is member of what has been called the "Greatest Generation," those who helped the United States defeat fascism and totalitarianism during World War II. His sacrifices—and those of his fellow soldiers—helped secure the Allied victory and defend the American way of life we enjoy today. I am honored to recognize "Hutch's" service to his nation.

During the war, "Hutch" fought for his nation as a paratrooper with the famous "Screaming Eagles" of the 101st Airborne Division. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, "Hutch" was one of fourteen Screaming Eagles who jumped together from a plane into enemy territory. Only six would survive. As one of those six, "Hutch" continued fighting and heroically carried out his job as a demolition man, clearing out mines and booby traps for the American and Allied troops who would follow.

Mr. Speaker, our nation owes E.L. Hutchison and his fellow soldiers a great debt. Thanks to their efforts, the United States emerged from that terrible war victorious. Even though the war ended 58 years ago, we must never forget the sacrifices "Hutch" and the other American troops made. I am especially privileged to honor E.L. Hutchison today. Thank you for your service, "Hutch," and for helping to ensure that America remains the "Land of the Free."

RECOGNITION OF WILMA KIMMEL

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize Wilma Kimmel of Jefferson County, Illinois. Wilma was recently inducted into the Senior Saints Hall of Fame of Jefferson County.

Wilma received this honor for her lifelong service to others. She is known as a dedicated wife and mother. She and her husband, Ardell, raised three children. In order to help send her children to college she began work as a secretary for the Mt. Vernon School System where she worked for twenty years. Wilma has been involved with the 4-H Club, Rend Lake Piecemakers Quilt Guild, and Herbs for Health and Fun. No one can say that Wilma is not devoted to her church. At Central Christian Church she is known as a ready and willing hand for wherever there is a need. She is described as one who gets the job done and one who never complains.

I want to congratulate and thank Wilma for all she has done and will continue to do for the people in her community. She is a saint to all who know her and is deserving of this prestigious honor.

REGARDING THE ACTUARIAL
VALUE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG
BENEFITS OFFERED TO MEDI-
CARE ELIGIBLE ENROLLEES BY
A PLAN UNDER FEDERAL EM-
PLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS
PROGRAM

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was pleased to support H.R. 2631 which guarantees that the legislation designed to provide Medicare recipients with some prescription drug coverage would not lead to the creation of an inferior prescription-drug benefit for retired federal employees.

The Republican version of the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill, which passed the House on June 27, 2003 is a bad piece of legislation for many reasons. One of its many serious flaws is that it could result in a reduction of coverage for federal employees. Because of how the bill was written, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that as many as 1/3 of all retirees who currently have prescription drug coverage through their employer's

private plan will lose their coverage to the generally inferior set of benefits outlined in the House proposal. We cannot allow our retired federal workers to fall victim to capricious business practices geared toward increasing profits above all else. Federal employees who have dedicated many years of their lives to public service deserve to live out their retirement with dignity and security. H.R. 2631 will help achieve this.

The legislation proposes nothing radical in seeking to ensure that the prescription drug package enjoyed by current federal employees will be available to federal retirees as well. Currently there is parity between the two benefits packages. And, this non-partisan effort is dedicated to guaranteeing that this remains true.

Given the difficulties involved in retaining federal employees, we should all recognize that supporting this legislation will help communicate to new and current employees that their efforts and sacrifices are appreciated and will be honored even after they have completed their public service.

The rate of growth of premiums in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP), in comparison to the disproportionately slow growth in the cost of living adjustment (COLA), is a major concern for federal retirees. Since 1998, FEHBP premiums have increased more than 10% per year. Last year alone, FEHBP premiums increased 11%. During the same period, the federal retirement annuity COLA was only 1.4%. It is difficult enough to keep pace with these changes without the added pressure of having to deal with the possibility that the level of choice and service they have grown accustomed to during their employment will suffer in their retirement.

It is important that we do all that we can to help our federal retirees deal with the burden of financial shocks. Therefore I thank those of my colleagues who joined me in supporting H.R. 2631 and I commend Mr. DAVIS of Virginia for introducing the bill.

TRIBUTE TO RICK LUPE

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise before this body of Congress and this nation today to pay tribute to a true American hero. Rick Lupe recently passed away from injuries sustained while battling a prescribed burn on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation near Whiteriver, Arizona. I am saddened by his death and would like to take a moment to reflect on the courage and leadership of this honorable and distinguished individual.

Rick previously made headlines during another fire that took place last summer. When the Rodeo-Chediski fire scorched much of Arizona, Rick engineered a fire line at the last minute, using a back burn and bulldozers that helped save the town of Show Low. Such acts of courage are no surprise to those who knew him. In nearly two decades of service to the Fort Apache Hotshot crew, Rick developed a reputation as a strong but quiet leader, a loyal colleague, and trusted friend.

Rick possessed courage and toughness to spare. While checking on a hot spot recently,